

STOREFRONT for Art & Architecture

97 Kenmare Street at Lafayette, New York, NY 10012 212 431-5795

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EXHIBITION: "The Architecture of Imre Makovecz"
MEDIA: Drawings, models and photographs
DATES: May 3-28, 1989
OPENING RECEPTION: Wednesday, May 3rd, 6-8 p.m.
ADDRESS: 97 Kenmare Street at Lafayette
GALLERY HOURS: Wednesday - Saturday, 12-6 p.m.

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Although the principles of Imre Makovecz's organic architecture have offered a fruitful foundation for the investigations of many young architects in his native Hungary, and had some critical consideration and impact in England, Finland and Japan, Makovecz's work and theory has had little exposure in the United States. "The Architecture of Imre Makovecz" will be the first exhibition of his work in the U.S.

Born in 1935, for thirty years Makovecz has produced innovative architecture that is deeply rooted in Eastern philosophy and traditional Hungarian forms. In fact, Makovecz spent his youth helping his father, who was a carpenter, to reconstruct wooden buildings that had been damaged during the Second World War. With its insistence on communication between spirit, body, material, and landscape, Makovecz's is a contemporary organic architecture that has posed a vigorous challenge to technologically responsive, formulaic modernism.

The exhibition will present a range of his works - churches, residential projects, a number of community centers (including a major work, the Sarospatak Cultural Center), and projects created by Makovecz and architecture students during the experimental session he has conducted each summer since 1981 at a camp in the Visegrad Forest. The exhibition will also include a number of pages reproduced from his celebrated sketch book. It should be noted that the manner in which Makovecz runs his Budapest office is unique - in Hungary, as elsewhere - in that collaboration is encouraged, and it is common for Makovecz to turn an entire project over to a young architect and allow that architect to sign it. Therefore, a number of independent projects by architects associated with Makovecz will also be presented.

Tamas Nagy, a New York-based Hungarian architect who worked with Makovecz for two years, is the curator of the exhibition.

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For additional information, please call Shirin Neshat at (212) 431-5795.

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for Art & Architecture

The exhibition "The Architecture of Imre Makovecz" was presented at Storefront May 3-27 1989.

Curated by a former associate of Makovecz, Tamas Nagy, the exhibition presented twenty projects documented on thirty-two boards that included drawings, plans, photographs and text. In addition, there was a background text board, and two models--each exhibited on a base specifically designed to complement the forms of the project shown. The exhibition was rounded out by selections from Makovecz's writing that were written directly on the walls of the gallery. The Makovecz exhibition was extremely well-attended and well-received.

The exhibition subsequently travelled for presentation at Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pennsylvania; and Drury College, Springfield, Missouri.

Mr. Makovecz was scheduled to travel from Budapest to New York for the opening of the exhibition and to lecture, but he was unable to do so because of illness.

In addition to the work of Makovecz, there was a selection of projects presented that had been done by architects associated with his office.

97 Kenmare Street (near Lafayette) New York, NY 10012 212-431-5795

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

Architecture of Ages

Work of Hungarian Architect Imre Makovecz

April 4 - 28, 1985

Gallery Hours: Wed. - Sun. 11-6 PM

Reception: April 4, 6-8 PM

During the month of April, STOREFRONT will present an exhibition titled "Architecture of Ages", an introduction of the work of a Hungarian Architect Imre Makovecz, for first time in U.S. The purpose of this exhibit is to challenge the theories and realities of today's architecture: the needless reductivism of the Modernism to careless eclecticism of the "Post"s and "Neo"s. By examining the work of Imre Makovecz, we found that the reality of architecture really is unlimited limits, and its theory is ontologically human. The potential climax of such vision is an architecture which fuses Past and Future as one and equal, a shocking statement for those who believes in styles. Due to above questions and beliefs raised by Imre Makovecz, it is critically important that his work and mind be known in U.S.

"Architecture of Ages" will present photographs and drawings of built projects, along with an essay by Imre Makovecz stating the base of his architectural reality.

"I think, that under the sun of European culture, there is a second sun of the underworld, which radiates a mysterious old culture. In Eastern European folk art, in Celtic masks, in dresses and songs is no national spirituality, but one which capable to create people. I think it is my goal to bring this spirituality to consciousness in my life, my architecture and my research as much as it is possible. This task is especially in Hungary most difficult to achieve, but I believe that it is not posed other place."

Imre Makovecz

Makovecz received his architectural education at the Technical University in Budapest under Karoly Weichinger, Gyorgy Szrogh and Gyorgy Janossy in the year between 1954 and 1959. Between 1959 and 1962 he worked as an architect in the office of Urban Studies "BUVATTI" in Budapest, and from 1962 until 1971 in the office of SZOVIERV in Budapest. In 1971 he was appointed head of the architectural studio VATI in Budapest, a position he held until 1977. In the same year he joined the Forest Organization in Budapest where he completed a large number of project.

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Art and Architecture

Kyong Park/Glenn Weiss 51 Prince, New York, NY 10012 212-431-5795

May 2-27, 1989

Imre Makovecz

Nothing is as important as architecture, as the drama of the very idea of architecture.

—Imre Makovecz

The works of Imre Makovecz give expression to the continual compression and expansion of memory and desire which can be the process and experience of architecture. Born in Hungary in 1935, Makovecz was the son of a carpenter and as a youth he helped his father with the reconstruction of wooden buildings that had been damaged in the war. From 1954 to 1959 he studied architecture at the Technical University in Budapest, and he first worked as an architect in the Budapest Office of Urban Studies BUVATI from 1959 to 1962. Between 1962 and 1971, he was with the office, SZÖVTERV in Budapest and in 1977 he was appointed head of the Budapest architectural studio, VATI, a position he held until 1977.

The years he was associated with VATI were marked by the genesis of his first major work, the Sárospatak Cultural Center (completed in 1982), which represented a decisive break from his previous projects—these chiefly being restaurants, department stores, retail shops and offices of a small scale. With the Cultural Center, the two major influences of Makovecz's formative years as an architect were first pervasively manifest: the anthroposophic-based theory and work of Rudolph Steiner, and Hungarian folk architecture. Also during these years, as an alternative to the first postgraduate architectural course in Hungary that was implemented by the Association of Hungarian Architects, in 1972 Makovecz created an ad hoc postgraduate school which he ran out of a series of Budapest apartments. As an architect working outside the then-modernist mainstream, Makovecz was often regarded with hostility by his colleagues, but students found his "synthetic" attitude—to the past and the present, to the rooted and the free floating, and to the urban and the rural—fruitful and the school ran with great success until Makovecz disbanded it in 1977.

That year was a turning point for Makovecz, as he completed in collaboration with the interior designer Gábor Mezei the small and haunting Mortuary Hall in Farkasrét Cemetery, Budapest. And, having had his fill of practice in large offices, he literally retreated to the Visegrád Forest outside of Budapest where he became the head and only architect for the Pilisi Parkerdőgazdaság (the Hungarian equivalent of the U.S. Park Service). Working with a single assistant, Ms. Erzsébet Várlaki, he completed a number of small works—camp structures, restaurants, toilet facilities—and he was able once again to work side by side with the carpenters for these projects. During this period he also completed a number of churches and private houses. In addition, in 1981 he began conducting yearly experimental summer sessions for architecture students at a Visegrád camp. Twenty to thirty students participate each summer and jointly decide on a project to design and construction

*I
t is important that architecture develop not by satisfying its historical narcissism and generic limitations, but by giving shape to universal, divine phenomena. And even of these, those that are incarnated through the human body, and appear in the shape of Hungarian metaphor. This is anthropomorphic architecture, but in truth it is anthropomorphic only in the same way that human speech is possible only with the help of the mouth and throat. This architecture creates a world of lifelike objects somewhere on the borderline between heaven and earth. It is meant to be the new alternative: life lived consciously, closer to a new frontier.*

—Imre Makovecz

Makovecz retained his position with the forest service until the director who had hired him was fired. Makovecz then resigned and returned to Budapest. However, before leaving, Makovecz had already joined and begun his work that continues today with the People's Education Institute, an organization whose purpose is to reach isolated villages and help them construct community centers in an effort to preserve and stimulate local cultural life. Since the early eighties, Makovecz has worked with community groups to design and construct numerous community centers. These projects have allowed Makovecz to continue the small-scale experiments with available materials that he began in the Visegrád Forest.

By the mid-eighties, Makovecz's work was well-known throughout Europe, and in 1986, Makovecz, presented with commissions too numerous to handle on his own and with increasing pressure coming from young architects desiring to work with him, opened his own office. Currently he works with some thirty architects, most of whom were participants in his summer architecture camps. Mindful of the repression he experienced in his early years as an architect in other offices, Makovecz has made it common practice to turn complete control of projects over to young architects in his office and allows them to sign their work. In addition to community centers, his office has produced many schools, libraries and other community-related buildings. Also, Makovecz, a Catholic who has always been interested in ecclesiastic buildings, is currently working on two major church commissions, a Roman Catholic church at Paks and a Lutheran church at Siófok, which are included in the exhibition.

Tamas Nagy

April, 1989

For me, that which has happened and that which could have happened together make up the present. Like Uriel, it dashes along above our heads, in the sky; its power to structure has been left out of our history, our victories, and the often underestimated and perilous world of AS IF.

Have you never felt that "reality" is an orphan, have you never felt that "reality" was missing something? Are not the Mistaken, the Vanquished, missing from the acknowledged world?

The vague aura of objects, the misty roads of the valleys, have shown something of their essence to the Mistaken ones, but have remained invisible to the victorious. They have glimpsed only the shimmering shapes of ancient knights and magicians, the clammy outlines of ghosts, whereas in the sunshine, in the reflections of objects, the sharp contours and face of events, they should have also seen that which *could have been*. We must realize that what *has* happened and what has *not* happened are two sides of the same self *existence* which reproduces itself again and again even in the present, and it is terrible that only some corrupted part of us feels an affinity for the seemingly misshapen images of that which could have been, whereas it is from its uncorrupted beauty and lightless reality that the *True* is fashioned and made visible -- the only excuse for our presence. What challenges us time and again in the temptations of the body and soul is precisely that, that what we would like to see as one is torn apart -- the sum of our possibilities and aptitudes, or in other words, life as it could have been, and life as it has turned out, more or less to our satisfaction.

Nothing is more important than the present -- unless we recognize the future for what it is unless we realize that from the future we come to guide ourselves into the future.

The Earth turns towards the east, towards the Sun, which is seemingly standing; and as it turns around its own axis, going around the Sun in its elliptical orbit, the Sun Advances. We stand wherever we are, as the beginning and the end

of this dance; this is how we experience it, we see the Sun rise in the sky, and advancing above our heads, decline. Though we know that it is *we* who are turning, and not the Sun, our consciousness of a beginning and an end is more real than this spatial dance, for we think of ourselves in *time*, and not in space, in the quietude of time--thus do we have a consciousness of ourselves as the center beyond the world, or if you like, within the world, but not *on* the world.

That which has happened and that which could have happened advance through us on one single thread, for we are creatures and creators of a new world. Though we are turning, our portry lights up the dawn as surely as the rising sun--the earthly image of our other- worldly admiration. We were the delicate, translucent ghosts of a world now in the making, which we are creating somewhere invisible and independently of our wills. This world mingles with our dreams and orphaned reality.

God is in front of and behind us, not only in time, but in space as well. And the circumstance that His image appears on our faces, and in His Dreams this image unites with Him, and when we awaken, we are cast off like shells, this is not cause for indignation; in our dreams we are just as lonely and dispossessed as He, in our dreams we too become one with ourselves (in the guise of our actions), and wake up feeling deprived, for that which has happened and that which could have happened fall away and expand around us, like the perpetual expansion of the world, whereas the only place where we could grasp the moment of leaving and arrival simultaneously, the Real Home, is our most vital experience, the consciousness of *I*.

Imre Makovez

April, 1989